

October 19, 2009

OBEY BRIEFED ON PLANS FOR LOCAL AGRICULTURE INNOVATION CENTER

OWEN, WI – Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) was in Owen today to receive a briefing from local leaders about how they will be using federal grant money to build the Central Wisconsin Agricultural Innovation Center. The center – a joint project between the City of Owen and the Clark County Economic Development Corporation – received a \$4 million federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant to help jump start this job-creating effort. The funding was part of last year's Appropriations bill which Obey shepherded through the House of Representatives.

"I'm glad to be here to see first-hand what the plans are for the Agricultural Innovation Center, said Obey. Local officials have told me they expect this effort to produce or preserve as many as 200-300 agriculture-related jobs." The 50,000 square foot facility will provide space for start-up agricultural businesses, research and development efforts in renewable energy and technology, and educational training programs. "If there is one true quality about agriculture, it's that things are always changing," Obey added, "And there are many good opportunities created by exploring value-added agriculture such as specialty and artisan cheeses."

The Agricultural Innovation Center will be the focal point of a 71-acre agribusiness park located along the south side of Highway 29 in Owen. The building will be able to accommodate a variety of small businesses and will be constructed using the highest (Platinum) LEED standards to ensure that the new facility is highly energy efficient.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the new center is scheduled for the spring of 2010 and the City of Owen plans to begin constructing the infrastructure for the agribusiness park at that time.

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